

African Finfoot *Podica senegalensis* foraging in association with Nile Crocodile *Crocodylus niloticus*

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Grèbifoulque *Podica senegalensis* cherchant de la nourriture en association avec un Crocodile du Nil *Crocodylus niloticus*. En Afrique du Sud, un Grèbifoulque *Podica senegalensis* a été observé qui suivait un crocodile pour se nourrir des invertébrés aquatiques dérangés par les mouvements de ce dernier. Ce type de comportement a été noté chez d'autres espèces aquatiques comme le Jacana à poitrine dorée *Actophilornis africanus*, en association avec des crocodiles ou éléphants. Note éditoriale: au Congo-Brazzaville des Grèbifoulques ont été vus se nourrissant autour ou même sur des Buffles de forêt *Syncerus caffer*.

On 30 July 2006, while watching a female African Finfoot *Podica senegalensis* foraging at Muirhead Dams, Limpopo Province, South Africa, I observed a Nile Crocodile *Crocodylus niloticus* swimming towards the shallow water at the inlet of the dam. On noticing the crocodile, the finfoot immediately changed course and swam fairly rapidly towards the crocodile, which was

c.40 m away. At this stage the crocodile had reached the shallow water and was slowly waddling through the mud. The finfoot followed closely in its wake, catching aquatic invertebrates disturbed by the crocodile's movements (Fig. 1). Although foraging opportunism is commonly reported for, e.g., Cattle Egrets *Bubulcus ibis* and Fork-tailed Drongos *Dicrurus adsimilis*, which



Figure 1. Female African Finfoot *Podica senegalensis* feeding on aquatic invertebrates disturbed by a Nile Crocodile *Crocodylus niloticus*, Muirhead Dams, Limpopo Province, South Africa, 30 July 2006 (Derek Engelbrecht)

Grèbifoulque *Podica senegalensis* femelle capturant des invertébrés aquatiques dérangés par les mouvements d'un Crocodile du Nil *Crocodylus niloticus*, Muirhead Dams, Limpopo Province, Afrique du Sud, 30 juillet 2006 (Derek Engelbrecht)

associate with grazing animals (Hockey *et al.* 2005), this is, as far as I can establish, the first documented record of foraging opportunism by an African Finfoot. Pitman (1962) describes a similar incident from Uganda, in which an African Jacana *Actophilornis africanus* 'with butterfly-wise flicks of its wings' skipped across the backs of two crocodiles to seize aquatic organisms disturbed by another crocodile moving through a shallow pool covered by floating vegetation. In Kenya, the same author observed a dozen jacanas following an African Elephant *Loxodonta africana* foraging in the shallows of a swamp, to feed on the aquatic life that was disturbed.

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References

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Editorial comment.—This note elicited the following comment by F. Dowsett-Lemaire: 'In Nouabalé-Ndoki National Park, in northern Congo-Brazzaville, several African Finfoots were observed feeding around a group of Forest Buffalo *Syncerus caffer* in a forest pool. Some even clambered onto the buffaloes to take small prey (?insects) (Richard Ruggiero pers. comm. to FD-L in 1996).'